

Swarthmore, PA — Today, Congressman Joe Sestak celebrated Earth Day at the Energy Forum for Earth Day Celebration in Swarthmore and highlighted what he is working on to address environmental issues of Global Warming, Watershed Management and energy independence.

The first Earth Day, which was celebrated in 1970, brought together millions of people from around the country to demand a safer, cleaner and healthier world. That Earth Day had an astounding impact on public policy. Congress quickly and overwhelmingly passed the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act.

“Earth Day should not just be a day for celebration; it should be a call to action,” noted Joe. “Global warming and our addiction to oil are some of the greatest challenges of our time, putting at risk our economy, our environment, and our national security. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to act now.”

In February, the world’s top climate scientists put out a landmark report that concluded that global warming is ‘unequivocal’ and that human activity is the main cause. The report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was agreed to by more than 100 countries and stresses the definitive role humans have had and are still having on climate change.

In Congress, Joe has been working on legislation to address the problem of global warming, including cosponsoring and passing H.R. 6, the CLEAN Energy Act, which repealed \$14 billion in subsidies given to Big Oil companies and shifts those resources to investments in clean, alternative energy and energy efficiency. In addition, Congressman Sestak supported the Democratic Budget, which placed a high priority on tackling global warming and making America more energy independent.

He is also helping push through legislation which helps refocus our efforts on alternative energies, including his cosponsorship of H.R. 550, the Securing America’s Energy Independence Act, which extends the energy tax credit for solar energy property and qualified fuel cell property and the tax credit for residential energy efficient property expenditures. And he is a cosponsor of H.R. 1506, the Fuel Economy Reform Act, which seeks to improve the fuel efficiency of our cars by raising the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards.

“As we look ahead to the summer driving season, Americans are already seeing exorbitant rises in gas prices, and this is only the beginning,” added Joe. “We must do more to make us more energy independent, including raising CAFE standards and supporting alternative fuels.”

Since his election to Congress, Congressman Sestak has been addressing the issue of proper watershed management. One of the biggest threat to our rivers, lakes, and streams comes from the indirect runoff of pollutants from our everyday lives. Oil from our city streets and parking lots, excess fertilizer and herbicides that runoff from our lawns, and animal waste from farms all find its way into our rivers, lakes, streams, and coastal waters. During a heavy storm, like the one we experienced last weekend, the runoff and pollution being dumped into our waterways increases exponentially.

One of the first things he did was tour our municipalities to see the impacts of the 2004 floods in our region, including what culverts needed repair and what streams and river banks needed restoration, to discern how best to address the problem. Because of these concerns, since the recent election Joe has met with interested parties from conservation groups and Jamie Anderson, watershed specialist for Delaware County Conservation District, to the Army Corps of Engineers to develop a comprehensive watershed review that takes advantage of existing plans to best define the problems we are facing and serve as a comprehensive action for all involved to help implement

He has met with Jeff Featherstone, an expert in flood plain mapping from Temple University, about our outdated mapping; the Army Corps of Engineers about the need to have a comprehensive watershed review and to ask them to survey the district and outline a plan to do so; and almost all of the local watershed groups in the district to review the Corps’ proposal for a comprehensive approach they had developed for Joe as a district-wide watershed management plan including funding requirements. Congressman Sestak will also be meeting with the remainder of the watershed organizations about this issue.

As a result of these meetings, Congressman Sestak will work on three phases to accomplish our watershed goals while also providing for the environmental restoration of our creeks: (1) Have the Army Corps of Engineers conduct a Reconnaissance Study, which would cost about \$250,000 and which the Congressman will seek federal funding for, using existing information to identify the problems, needs and opportunities regarding water resources in the study area. He will also seek out interested, non-Federal entities like the state of Pennsylvania to partner with the Corps for the study (historically, Pennsylvania has not agreed to cost share Feasibility

Studies like this one, even though similar agencies of other states frequently participate. Joe is committed to working with Governor Rendell and district representatives from our state legislature to ensure this partnership happens). (2) Once the non-federal partner is identified, he will work with all interested parties to conduct a Feasibility study with the Army Corps of Engineers, which would consist of detailed data collection and evaluation, formulation of several alternative plans, and a report making specific recommendations to Congress. This process typically cost around \$2-4 million, which is cost-shared between federal and non-federal partners, and could take from 2 to 5 years depending on how soon the money was available. (3) Last, once the Feasibility Study is completed and the resulting report is submitted to Congress, the recommended project can then receive Congressional authorization for construction, which the Congressman will pursue through the Water Resources Development Act.

“What we do today will have a significant impact on our watersheds tomorrow,” added Joe. “If we are going to leave our water purer for our children with environmental restoration of our creeks, we must redouble our efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive plan in which all interested parties and municipalities can participate.”

Just as the first Earth Day spurred new action on environmental reform, Congressman Sestak believes today’s Earth Day should be marked for Action by doing more to promote conservation, address global warming, and invest more in alternative clean energy. This includes:

1. Support the signing of the Kyoto Treaty to reduce carbon dioxide emissions
2. Raise fuel economy standards on automobiles to at least 35-40 mpg
3. Set 10 percent target for renewable energy and an ultimate target of 20 percent
4. Invest in alternative technologies such as fuel cells and bio-diesel
5. Strengthen “tailpipe emissions” standards
6. Encourage energy conservation by restoring tax incentives for energy efficient vehicles and equipment
7. Create an advanced research agency to produce new technologies that will reduce oil consumption, strengthen energy efficiency, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
8. Offer tax incentives to businesses that utilize alternative fuels and other clean energy technologies rather than offering tax breaks to big oil companies
9. Invest in infrastructure for E85 – a fuel blend that’s 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline and scarcely offered at service stations due to the high costs to mom and pop station owners to install the equipment
10. Ensure that our government has the ability to enforce responsible clean air and water regulations
11. Prohibit drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. □ According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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